

A ROADMAP TO **Recovery**

Reforming San Diego City Government

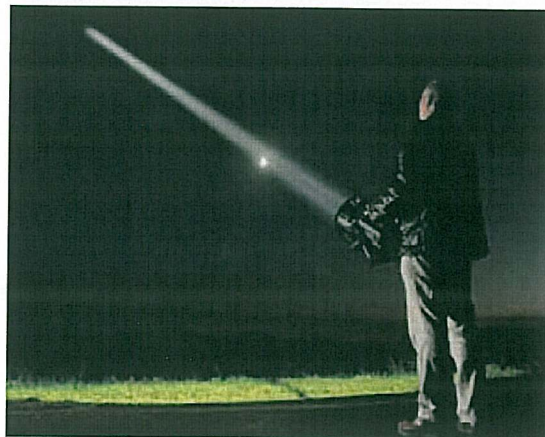
Commitment 2: Open Government

San Diegans deserve a city government that conducts all business in an open and transparent manner.

"Open Government" means that the public has a right to know what is going on inside city government – and has a right to play a role in the decision-making process.

It also means accessible government. The city should embrace technology and customer service innovations that make it easier for taxpayers to access city services – and provide feedback where improvements are needed.

Councilmember DeMaio has set a goal of making San Diego city government the most open and transparent city government in the country.



These proposed reforms are key steps to rebuilding public trust and confidence in local government.

FY 2012 Changes

Reform 2.1: Post All City Compensation and Labor Contracts Online

Budgeted salaries contained in the annual budget are only a fraction of the total compensation paid to city employees. To provide full disclosure on these matters, the city should publish the total compensation for every classification in city government, providing a range of base salary and maximum specialty pays available for each classification to display a potential maximum "base."

Additionally, the city should post online the actual earnings of city positions – with names redacted – for the preceding fiscal year.

Finally, all current labor contracts should be posted online in a readily accessible fashion – along with the last 3 iterations of the labor contract to allow for easy comparison.

This transparency will allow taxpayers to determine whether excessive compensation continues in city government, and better understand the intricacies of city labor costs.

Reform 2.2: Post All City Contracts Online

The city has entered into more than \$200 million in city contracts – and taxpayers deserve to know who is receiving these contracts and under what pricing, terms, and work requirements. We propose that all city contracts in excess of \$25,000 be posted online on the city's website, and any contractor that has received in excess of \$25,000 cumulatively from the city also be posted with links to all contracts awarded to that contractor. Simply putting a list of the contracts is not enough - the full text of the scope of work and contract terms should be posted for each contract.

Reform 2.3: Request Monthly Public Comment and Question Session with the Mayor

Under the Strong Mayor-Strong Council form of governance the Mayor no longer chairs, nor regularly attends, City Council meetings. It could be argued that the public has limited access or opportunity to bring their issues directly before the Mayor, as they did under the Manager-Council form of government.

We propose amending the Permanent Rules of Council to include a monthly 30 minute "Question and Comment" Session with the Mayor for members of the public.

Reform 2.4: Expand Access to the City Council Docket

Under the current Permanent Rules of the City Council, it takes four Councilmembers to place an item on the docket if the Council President does not wish to have it docketed.

In a truly open government, access to the City Council docket is a fundamental right of every city councilmember. Docket access allows a councilmember to put a legislative idea before the full council for open discussion in public and a call for a recorded vote.

As one of its first acts after the December 6th's inauguration ceremony, the new City Council should amend its Permanent Rules to allow an item to be placed on the Council docket upon request of two City Council members.

Long-Term Changes

Reform 2.5: Consolidate All Call Centers in City Government for One-Stop Service – and One “311” Number

We believe that one “311” call number is a common-sense vehicle to improve customer service and reduce call center costs in the city.

The Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) system has a customer service module that is currently being piloted by the Utilities Department. Once implemented this system can integrate customer information across city departments – e.g. an individual calling in to pay a water bill can be reminded that an outstanding parking ticket is also due.

Using ERP as a vehicle, and adding on a project management “ticket” system, we propose consolidating all city call centers within two years into a single “Citizen Service Center” for taxpayers to request services or transact business with the city.

Reform 2.6: Post City Checkbook Online

Once the ERP system is fully operational, the City should explore placing its external financial transaction online in a searchable format. Doing so would give taxpayers access to a virtual checkbook of the city government – increasing oversight and transparency.

Reform 2.7: Achieve Online Access to 95% of Transactions Between City and the Public By FY 2015

The City of San Diego should embrace e-commerce by committing to providing online access to 95% of transactions online in the next three years. Transitioning to online service delivery for these activities not only improves service to the public, but generates cost savings inside city departments.

This goal expands one of our proposals to commit to 95% of transactions with small businesses online during the same time period.

Some efforts are already underway. For example, the Police Department is currently working to create an application which allows businesses to apply, renew, and pay for alarm systems permits online. The Police Department has indicated that the reduced burden of permitting paperwork will save the department “significant time and money.”

Other cities, such as New York City and City of Louisville, Kentucky, have made strides in improving the availability of information and resources for small business owners. Efforts in these cities have included the creation of “one-stop” resources for small business owners that allow users to meet all federal, state, and local requirements through a single point of contact.

NYC Business Express (New York City's one-stop resource), consolidates all relevant business compliance information into a single location. The NYC Business Express Wizard additionally provides automated individualized information and assistance and the ability to apply for permits online.

To jumpstart implementation of this reform, the City should explore public-private partnership opportunities to institute a pilot program to develop an online “one-stop” business resource similar to the NYC Business Express Wizard. The program would assist business owners with less-complicated projects and use phone and appointment services as a supplement for more complicated matters.

The program could be instituted in phases, considering only a subset of permit types, regulations, and industries with each phase. New York City started the wizard at first to only include the restaurant industry, and has worked its way up to providing this service to about twenty different sectors since 2006.